face from bringing something off, money is paid in advance, rush tactics are employed to prevent the man returning from abroad from marrying the sweetheart of his college days, and in some cases even magic is resorted to, though in secret. This black magic, especially, involves some very undignified actions. A younger cousin of mine once warned his mother: "Please, Mother, never try to sell me like a bullock, or worse still to arrange a marriage for my sister. I will not help you to jump thrice on eggshells or throw ten viss of fish into a well at dead of night under instructions from a soothsayer."

Although marriages were constantly being arranged among our circle of friends in Thaton, I was not allowed to attend weddings as a young unmarried girl. What we did attend regularly with the grown-ups were the *u-bok-nay*, the duty day gatherings every week in the resthouses among the hills. On these days Buddhists who choose to observe the day, obey eight or ten precepts instead of five. Amongst these ten are the abstaining from food after mid-day, absence of ornament and cosmetics in dress, meditation and prayer, and absence of a high couch in sleep. In Thaton the observance of this day was made the weekly social event with the same combination of material enjoyment and religious piety that characterizes all Burmese functions as described previously. Each family went to the hills early in the morning with mats, betel boxes and a well-cooked meal. The girls wore all the jewellery they had because we had not yet taken the precepts, and this was a good chance of showing that a family did not lack wealth. We met in the resthouses, to one of which a monk came to intone the precepts. These we repeated in chorus after him; then the elders talked and chewed betel, and at about 10-30 the whole party went to bathe in the pools made by the waterfalls down the hills. We went back to find the pooled dishes of four or five families laid out in a rich feast. We stuffed ourselves with this. The law states that food should not be eaten after noon, and the law was always obeyed in the letter if not in the spirit.

One maiden lady in Rangoon who kept duty days regularly ate till as near noon as she possibly could. She usually finished her meal with fruit, and if she was eating a banana when noon struck with a loud bang from the cannon at the Shwe Dagon Pagoda, "Haw!" she would exclaim, and in would go the whole length of the banana into her mouth. After noon, tea and coffee are not allowed either but aerated waters, which look so much like water, are sanctioned. When my husband was a novice monk in the monastery, they were allowed medicinal products also after noon, and the hungry young novices often made a delicious soup of garlic (a digestive) fried in butter (medicinal component), and water poured on to the fragrant compound.

759
278

A village of 2000 persons may have 10 or more doctors. The more successful "move up" to the towns and cities. Most of the medicines are herbs and chemicals including roots, leaves, fruits, berries, salt, and salphur. Many of the herbs are imported from India. Parts of animals such as crocodile skin, pig and horse droppings are used less frequently. The doctor must be a moral man of good character or the medicine will not be effective. He uses the right index finger "medical finger" to stir the concoctions. The family of the sick person may either prepare the medicine themselves from the doctor's directions or take it's own special preparations. Many cures are effected by regulating diet, and in most cases this plays an important part in the cure. The knowledge which the SAY-SAYA must command is extensive including not only the medic: wisdom of the ages but also the peculiarities of the patient and above all the relationship of the seasons (weather conditions) to the case.

[826]

759
477
177

If one doctor fails to cure, another may be called in after dismissing the first. A keen feeling of rivalry exists between the various doctors and there are no cooperative consultations. Although each prides himself on a specialty the secrets of which he jealously guards he feels qualified also to handle any other medical problems. "If two are of the same thoughts, they are enemies" emphasizes the general attitude of competition seen in many other phases of Burmese life. The Burmese doctors are invariably applied to for help first. If this does not succeed modern midicinal facilities are sought. If modern medicine fails it is greatly derided. Maung Maung Than's aunt was ill for a long time and, after consulting many Burmese specialists she was taken to the Rangoon Mission Hospital where her case was diagnosed as advanced breast cancer beyond cure. His uncle, though not a medical man, is recognised as a last resort specialist who when the patient is beyond any other help administers lime juice (ordinarily fatal where fever is involved) in a "do or die" treatment. He is warned off when he appears at a sick house for the risk often does not pay off.

759
776

Illness is frequently caused by supernatural spirits acting either independently or as agents for "black magic" specialists.

262

HAS NGUN or NA NGAN (The tumeric: curcuma longa, Linn). In Pantanaw one anna could buy two and a half ticals of tumeric which will last two or three months because it is used just to counteract the offensive smells of some fish and prawns and meat, and for this purpose just a pinch is sufficient. Thus in Rangoon the family has used only two annas worth of tumeric during the past twelve months. Three annas' worth of tumeric in the refugee camp is about equivalent to one anna's worth here. This was used in every meal both in Pantanaw and in camp.

PAZUN DOKE (The Crayfish: Astacys sp.) Crayfish is available during the rains and during the working of the INS are obtained free. Each eating in Pantanaw required thirty to forty ticals at Rs. 2/- per viss. This was eaten during three or four meals a month. In Tawthalin, Thadingyut and Tazaungmon they are obtained free. PAZUN DOKE were available all the year round. In the refugee camp crayfish have not been eaten once.

HT-N NYIT (Palmyra root: Borassus flabellifer, Linn.) Palmyra root was eaten once in Pathne, when some people who came down from Upper Burma brought them down and gave U Myaing's family about two or three hundred as a present. They are eaten after baking. In Rangoon they buy this root if they desire to eat it. U Myaing is the only one in the family who has eaten it here, and even he has had it only once. He bought two roots for two annas, and each of them weighed about one and a half or two ticals.

ARO-NLUT or THIN U (The Arrowroot: Curcuma augustifolia, Roxb.,) was obtained back in Pantanaw through the medium of barter. The season for arrowroot is Tazaungmon and Nadaw and was eaten once or twice in each of these two months. About fifty to sixty ticals were consumed at each eating at six annas per viss. Here in camp one anna's worth (2½ ticals) is eaten by U Myaing at each eating, which is only when he goes to town. U Myaing has eaten it four to six times during the last year. He consumed one anna's worth at each eating.

MIN GUT-THEE (The mangosteen: Garcinia mangostana, Linn.,). Mangosteen fruit is not eaten in Rangoon at all by the family and in Pathne it was eaten only for its value as a part of a prescribed medicinal diet. There it was eaten about once a year when U Myaing returned from his business trip to Rangoon and brought back about fifteen fruit costing two or three rupees. [278]

DOMIN THEE (The durian, Durio zibethinus, D.C.) has not been eaten once here. In Pathne it was eaten only when U Myaing returned from his trip to Rangoon. Only two or three Durian fruit were consumed in a year. These fruit cost between Rs. 1/4 and Rs. 1/8 for each. Each fruit has a spiky covering and weighs about 60 to 70 ticals. There are several sections within and each contains a big seed which is itself inedible.

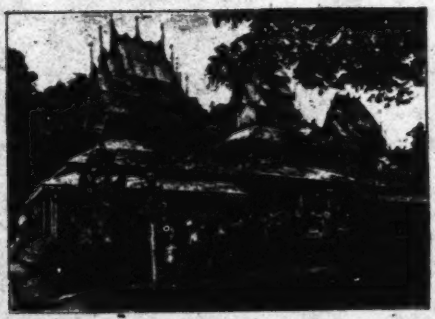
LEIN MAN THEE (oranges) have been eaten three times here. They have to be bought for Daw Aw Zar five for Re. 1/- at a time, and the others share her oranges whenever she eats them.

NGAPI GYAW . In camp eight or ten annas' worth of NGAPI GYAW lasts one month and weighs about twelve and one half ticals. This has been eaten ten or fifteen times during the past year. It was eaten in Pathne for every meal during ten out of the twelve months of the year. The NGAPI was obtained free in Pantanaw. (See section in "Work" for method of making NGAPI.)

NGAPI AYE-R CHET. This is NGAPI cooked as in Upper Burma, that is, mixed with tamarind, etc., to flavour it with sour ingredients. This was eaten only during about two or three meals in the year. Twenty to twenty five ticals lasts two meals. In the last twelve months this has been eaten five or six times. Eight annas buys ten ticals of NGAPI here.

NGAPI YE GYO (NGAPI mixed with water). Ten ticals lasts three

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4



280. KOTHEIKA YON (p. 101).

of the unsuccessfully vaccinated caught the disease, and ten of them died. None of the forty-four were attacked. These statistics could be multiplied. The medicine-dealers keep many of the crude commercial drugs, besides simples of their own collecting. Of the former, the principal are aloes, jalap, croton-seed, senna, bitter barks, catechu, opium, camphor, ginger, cardamom and other aromatics. The medicinal use of castor-oil is not known, though the plant is common. Spirits are now used medicinally. Many of the vegetable remedies are almost inert (see *The Burmese, what do they know of medicine?* by Dr. D. H. Cullimore). But there is one that deserves to be known, namely, the Shan remedy for tape-worm, *thsse*, which is both effectual and mild. Among the mineral drugs are mercury, calomel, sulphur, blue and green vitriols, alum, salammoniac, nitre. There is a whole category of supposititious remedies, tiger's gall, rhinoceros' blood, ant-eater's scales, and so forth; they are charred before being made up. Allied to this class of remedies is that of charms, the vendors of which (nat-wives—*nakkadaw*) trade on the superstition that disease is caused by demons. Every patient will be as particular to mention his star as to describe his complaint. He will be advised to avoid certain classes of remedies on certain days. The "Sunday son" must not purge on Friday, and so on. In times of epidemic and panic, *thibbuzedi* are erected at every house, as they likewise are in cases of sickness (No. 431). They are merely of sand, held together with circles of bast. Sometimes they are erected to avert calamity declared to be impending in a *shwepo-hkwins*, a message on gold foil dropped from heaven by a *Thadyâ* (p. 186). Images are dedicated

281. CHILDREN'S BAZAR (p. 101).

25: Ferrars E-5 (ca. 1890) 1901 APl Burma
Burmese AP4

757
278
755
[782]

282. PREPARING TAWTHALIN OFFERINGS (p. 188).

at the temples in the same spirit. *Thèbônzeli* are erected on the day of a sick person's planet, and decorated with flags according to the years of age. Here Buddhism, which knows of no vicarious merit (or demerit), is tainted by a survival of animism (p. 188). The merit of the act is intended to cancel the demerit of some troubled spirit which is seeking to possess the body of the sufferer. Offerings are likewise set apart for the troubled spirit in the forest, to divert him from the sick person. When an epidemic of cholera occurs, the whole village sets up a din at sunset with bamboo sticks, to frighten the demons away. But many minds are averse to such superstitions, and they seek for natural explanations. They ascribe disease to states of the blood, to "heats" and "vapours." The cooling qualities of nitre are extolled for the one, and the cordial effects of spice for the other. Dietetic questions interest everybody, and everyone has his or her pet nostrum. Very little operative surgery is attempted as compared with India and China—merely the opening of abscesses and setting of bones. Hare-lip and cleft palate, and the cognate deformities, appear to be frequent. The dressings applied to wounds and sores are chiefly turmeric, slaked lime, *nlm*-leaves.

758
752

Successful lithotomies and other major operations, and the boon of chloroform, have spread the fame of western surgery in a vastly wider circle than it can reach itself. The sick are tenderly nursed by the Burmans, and never abandoned in panic fear as happens in epidemics among the hill-tribes. There are few greater sources of religious merit than ministering to the sick. During the puerperium, the Burman custom is to main-

[482]

844

283. BURMAN CARRIER.

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

787 826 Omens are read from the position of mongoloid spots on the newborn baby's body. They are said to represent marks put on in a previous existence and their presence proves the child was then a human being. A blue spot on the foot presages a life of travel. Any marks leading from the right shoulder to the left hip, the line that the royal riband takes, indicate a royal future; today, however, with no royalty in Burmese society, such marks merely forecast a "great" future for the child.

775 826 A child is constantly watched from the time of birth for signs of whose reincarnation it represents. This is a constant topic in the family conversations.

Any disfigurement in a newborn child is regarded as a carry-over of the parents' store of demerit, as well as that of the child, from previous existences. It is regarded with a sense of shame and sorrow.

845 Although multiple births are neither preferred nor desired, they are not looked upon with any marked anxiety nor are there any supernatural means employed to prevent them.

766 In the event of a stillborn baby, the corpse is given special treatment. It is kept in a case, clothed and powdered, and a tray of food is set in front of it every day. It is considered auspicious to care for a stillborn child in this manner: the spirits will guide the parents in their dreams toward the attainment of material prosperity.

751 854 [825] [753] For the normal baby who survives, a number of things are done by Burmese parents to protect it from malevolent influences. Before it is a month old, a tiger bone is ground on a stone, together with a little water, and mixed with honey. This is fed to the child to ward off a mysterious infant illness associated with the tiger. A connection is believed to exist between the tiger and convulsions; some parents place a tiger skin under the mattress of the baby's bed to guard against such illness. A knife placed under the baby's mattress is said to protect against illness in general.

To insure good health and well-being for the child, a white thread over which certain *mantras* have been recited may be given by a Buddhist monk and tied around the baby's wrists. Should a baby be admired by people for its growth, the thread may be left on to neutralize the harm that is believed to result from such expressions.

[278] When the child's umbilical cord has dried and fallen off, it is kept and used as a medicine for any illness that befalls the child. A little of it is ground up and mixed with water for such purposes.

000 A very close connection is believed to exist between mother and child during

23: Brant & Mi Mi Khaing E, I-5 (1949-1950)1951
AP1 Burma
Burmese AP4

mony, but in actual practice this often takes place as early as her seventh or eighth year. Since this is a feast occasion involving considerable expense to her family, there is a tendency to hold a single ceremony, at which perhaps a pubescent girl, together with her younger sisters or cousins, will all have their ears bored. On the same occasion male children of approximately the same age may be initiated into the Buddhist monkhood.[5]

The girl initiate is dressed for the occasion in the traditional garb of the Burmese court, and in addition she wears a spired-helmet type of head dress. The villagers gather at her family's house for the event. An elderly woman rubs an anaesthetic plant substance on the girl's ear lobes and pierces them with gold pins. The pins are left in the ears, bent back. Later, if larger holes are desired, rolled leaves may be inserted. The family presents gifts to the assembled guests; often these are conventionalized tokens, such as inscribed cigars and fans.

Courtship and Marriage. Young people in the villages find ample opportunities to assess each other's manners, physical appearance, and personality in the company of others, at feasts and various gatherings. If a young man and woman are together apart from the company of others it is assumed that sex relations are involved. In fact, such going together is spoken of as "getting married." The Burmese find it hard to conceive of a young unmarried couple associating on a purely friendly, non-sexual basis: such behavior would be regarded as contrary to nature. However, unchaperoned association is disapproved and does not occur very frequently.

Once a pair have decided they wish to marry, the boy will inform his parents of his desire. They will already know, especially in the smaller villages, of the standing of the girl's family and of her dowry potentialities; in fact, as soon as they have sensed their son's interest in a particular girl they will take steps to acquire this information. They will also ascertain whether acceptance by the girl's family is likely. In a small community the approach may be made directly by the boy's parents. In larger centers a female go-between is more likely to be employed. The boy's parents will be informed by the girl's family that the decision must await the outcome of consultation with an astrologer concerning the compatibility of the birth dates of the prospective bride and groom. If the marriage is found to be an auspicious one—which it will usually be found to be if the girl's parents desire the match—an affirmative answer will be relayed to the boy's parents. The latter will then call upon her parents and in the presence of elders, not necessarily related to either family, formally ask for the girl's hand.

5 Description of the boy's initiation ceremony is being reserved for a separate publication.